

ABZ Accessibility Forum

19th March 2024

Present

Andrea Barclay-Scarry	Co-Chair, Aberdeen Access Forum & AIACC Representative
Kevin Douglas	AIAL, Terminal Operations Manager
Gemma Mason	AIAL, Administrator
Billy Wallace	AIAL, Security Manager
Emily Kilby	CAA
Samantha Saunders	ABM, Head of assisted services
Manoj Chellingi	ABM, Manager
Judith Forbes	NHS Grampian, Orkney & Shetland discharge nurse.
Stan Flett	Aberdeen Action on Disability
Pamela Munro	Airport User
Vic Baxter	Airport User
Katrina Michie	Shopmobility Aberdeen
Carolynne Fishburn	Aberdeenshire Council
Sam Reid	Deaf Action

Apologies

Hussein Patwa	Co-Chair, Aberdeen Access Forum & Disability Equity Partnership
Fraser Bain	AIAL, Project Manager
Mags Corbett	AlzScot
Kirstin Torrie-McPherson	Deaf Action
Phionna McInnes	Wee Too
Fiona Heinonen	Kayleigh's Wee Stars
Shona Owen	Airport User

Agenda

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies (Andrea Barclay-Scarry)
2. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting of 10th October 2023 (Andrea Barclay-Scarry)
3. Security – Next Generation Security Changes (Billy Wallace)
4. AIA Update (Kevin Douglas)
5. Update on Standing items (Andrea Barclay-Scarry & Kevin Douglas)
6. NHS Forum Update (Andrea Barclay-Scarry & Kevin Douglas)
7. Feedback, including any personal experiences (Kevin Douglas & All)
8. Travel Experiences (Vic Baxter)
9. Membership Discussion (Andrea Barclay-Scarry & All)
10. AOB (All)

1. Welcome, Introductions and apologies. – Attendees in person and online to introduce themselves (name and organisation represented)

A Barclay-Scarry welcomed all present and went around the boardroom table and screens for introductions.

G Mason noted apologies.

2. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting 10th October 2023 – Members to advise of any changes to minutes previously circulated and agree.

A Barclay-Scarry asked the forum for feedback from the previous Access ABZ forum minutes. There were no queries raised by the forum.

3. Security – Next Generation Security Changes

B Wallace presented the forum with an overview on the Next Generation security project is currently underway at AIAL. The new equipment will be implemented by the June 2024 deadline imposed by the UK Government. Passengers will be permitted to travel with larger sized liquids in cabin baggage and large electrical items will no longer require to be removed from luggage during the security screening process.

A Barclay-Scarry queried if there has been additional training provided to staff for passengers travelling through security with an assistance dogs.

B Wallace advised there are procedures in place to meet the regulatory requirements for screening of assistance dogs and their handlers.

A Barclay Scarry updated the forum on the familiarisation and training session with AIAL staff for passengers that travel through security with a guide dog which has been delayed until the next generation project has been completed.

K Michie asked if the process for wheelchair passengers using the new body scanner had changed. B Wallace advised there are no changes, there are already procedures in place for passengers unable to use the body scanner.

S Saunders questioned if there has been training around auto insulin monitors etc and if these technical devices can go through the new equipment. B Wallace confirmed there are no issues.

C Fishburn asked if there were plans to install visible markers to the Perspex screens on the baggage screening which would increase their visibility?

K Douglas advised, decals are in progress and central search is continually being observed to establish any additional signage required.

K Michie inquired if AIAL will be offering a “dry run” through central search prior to travel for passengers with additional needs so that they will know what to expect. K Douglas confirmed familiarisation tours will be offered once Next Gen is in place. For any queries in the meantime, please contact K Douglas or M Chellingi.

A Barclay raised some concerns around how staff will communicate instructions to visually or hearing impaired passengers on how and where to stand without man handling or physically touching them

4. AIA Update

K Douglas explained there were 16,368 passengers provided with assistance in 2023. Highlighting, 73.31% were pre-notified over 36hours. Airlines with the highest participation of passengers requiring assistance was BH Air at 2.46%, followed by TUI (1.72%).

S Saunders commented the pre-notified figures are comparable to other UK airports.

K Douglas provided a breakdown of the service information for 2023 by classification. The table showed WCHR* equated to 51.53%, followed by WCHS** at 35.33%

**WCHR – Passengers who can ascend and descend steps and move in the aircraft cabin but who require a wheelchair for distance to/from the aircraft*

*** WCHS – Passengers who cannot ascend and descend steps, where the wheelchair is required to/from the aircraft and the passenger must be carried up/down the steps but is able to make their own way to/from cabin seat*

A Barclay Scarry queried are passengers travelling with assistance dogs were recorded separately? K Douglas advised, the classification was recorded under DPNA^ or Others.

^DNPA - Self-reliant passenger with an intellectual disability who can understand & respond to safety instructions who requires assistance (departure & arrival) through the airport to the boarding gate (departure & arrival)

V Baxter questioned if there were statistics recorded for wheelchairs damaged during transit? K Douglas advised it isn't recorded however the PRM team follow a strict process and an EMA document is completed.

An overview on pre-Booked assistance stated AIAL has met all targets on both arriving and departing PRM in January and February 2024. K Douglas highlighted that prebooking of assistance is beneficial as it allows ABM to plan for resource.

An update on the service provider ABM confirmed that Manoj Chellingi has replaced Joan Allan as the Special Assistance Manager. Joan recently retired after working at AIAL for 15 years.

ABM have recruited two seasonal part time staff along with increasing the customer service ambassadors to three for the summer season.

The Ambassadors are employed through ABM and can support with PRM during busy times by taking passengers to the gate etc.

An additional Ambulift due to arrive onsite at AIAL soon, which will increase flexibility and support over the busy summer period.

A Barclay Scarry inquired if there had been any further discussions reference the possibility of introducing volunteers to assist nervous passengers. Action for K Douglas to contact LPL airport who have introduced a successful volunteering programme.

C Fishburn asked if the airport ambassadors are easily identifiable? K Douglas advised the ambassadors wear purple hi-vis vests however if there are any alternative colours which would be more suitable, suggestions are welcomed.

M Chellingi highlighted the Canine Crew are onsite 1-2 days a week. The therapy dogs can help reduce a passenger's anxiety.

K Douglas provided an overview on the summer schedule which commences 31st March 2024. Unfortunately, due to a TUI aircraft no longer being based at ABZ, the twice weekly flight to Tenerife will end 24th April but will restart 2nd October 2024.

Ryanair have scheduled 3 flights per week to Alicante during the summer and its expected flights to this destination will return for Winter 2024.

Self Service Bag Drop Kiosks have been installed in the common use check in area. TUI and EasyJet have both gone live with positive feedback received from customers to date. The Self-Service Bag Drop for British Airways will be launched soon.

5. Update on Standing Items

K Douglas provided an update on standing items from previous forum's:

Assistance Email Address Auto Response

Due to the contract ending December 24, it isn't viable to set up an auto response until further clarity is received regarding contract tender. However, as an interim solution, the PRM team will confirm receipt of the email to the sender in a timely manner.

Sunflower Lanyards

Sunflower Lanyards along with signage promoting initiative are available at the assistance desk. The PRM team are wearing "how can I help" badges with the hope to encourage passengers to request assistance. The sunflower signage and lanyards were handed round to those in the room.

K Douglas to discuss promoting the initiative through social media with L McCann (AIAL Comms Manager)

S Saunders to compile and share a list of the countries using the sunflower lanyards throughout the world.

CLAN

K Douglas to further investigate the possibility of introducing CLAN volunteers at the airport and possibly assisting with Hospital patients.

K Douglas to liaise with AB around the named contact for CLAN, to ensure they are included in information and updates around changes at airport for cancer patients travelling to and from the islands.

Sighted Guiding Training and Guide Dog Training

In progress, A Barclay Scarry to advise options for providing this to ABM and Security Staff.

White Line Steps

In Progress – The painting of white lines along top of the steps at the main entrance will take place once the weather improves.

Car Park Office Access

In planning stage, further update to follow once available.

Website – Web Content Accessibility – Guidelines Version 2.2

Workplan for late March. K Douglas to provide updates once available.

Image Description / Alternative Text to AIAL Social Media Posts.

In progress – Updates to be provided once available.

6. NHS Forum Update

The NHS Forum is scheduled to take place on 26th March 2024.

The well-established group includes both NHS Orkney and Shetland, Loganair, ABM, Skytanking and AIAL.

Updates from the forum included, Loganair have updated their booking flow which asks the passenger to provide additional information from the

passenger reference their assistance requirements. This will ensure a seamless service and to establish if passengers are suitable to travel unaccompanied.

Unfortunately, the tour of AIAL for NHS contacts has been postponed due to budgetary constraints within the NHS.

7. Feedback, including any personal experiences.

K Douglas provided an overview on the feedback summary from 2023. Confirming there were 11 complaints and 9 compliments overall.

As per CAA requirements, AIAL have introduced an optional customer satisfaction survey for completion once a passenger has completed their travel journey. The response has been lower than expected at 10-12% however of the response received the feedback has been positive overall.

Month	Jan-24	Feb-24
Survey Sent	89	87
Arr Answered	4	4
Dep Answered	7	5
Total Response	11	9
% Response	12.36	10.34

C Fishburn suggested providing a printed version of the survey for passengers to complete? K Douglas to investigate and confirm if this will be possible to implement.

8. Travel Experiences

V Baxter provided the forum with a light-hearted insight to his wheelchair transfers experiences in faraway places.

The Forum extended their thanks for the entertaining stories.

9. Membership Discussion

There was a group discussion reference The Access ABZ Forum is looking for new members to join the Forum. New members can apply via ABZAccess@aiairport.com

P Munro recommended approaching various charity organisations by letter. K Douglas to draft up letter and send to A Barclay-Scarry/H Patwa for approval prior to distribution.

10.AOB

A suggestion was made regarding organising a meeting with other access forums with the aim to promote consistency and rationalisation across UK Airports. K Douglas advised this will be raised at the next CAA Accessibility Industry Meeting which is scheduled to take place on Friday 22nd March.

Proposed date for next Access Aberdeen Forum is October 2024.

A Barclay-Scarry brought meeting to a close.